

The committee released the following statement at the conclusion of the meeting to address their position regarding the issue:

“NCAA institutions have a responsibility to conduct their intercollegiate athletics programs in a manner designed to protect and enhance the physical and educational well-being of student-athletes. Institutions are expected to protect the health of and provide a safe environment for each of its participating student-athletes. In that regard, female student-athletes, including those who may be pregnant, should be treated in accordance with federal law and consistent with NCAA principles and bylaws.

Title IX protects pregnant student-athletes from discriminatory policies and treatment. Specifically, federal law requires that pregnant students be considered as having a temporary disability, and therefore consistent and equitable treatment of all students with temporary disabilities must be applied. While recent reports have focused on loss of athletics financial aid and departmental support, the CWA emphasized that institutions must have gender-neutral, nondiscriminatory policies and practices in all areas impacting student-athletes.

The CWA intends to develop, in consultation with other membership committees and experts, a toolkit that NCAA member colleges and universities can use to educate student-athletes and staff on the legal, medical and treatment expectations for pregnant student-athletes, as well as provide suggested best practice policies and procedures. The toolkit will include best practice models from the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook and from institutions that already have comprehensive policies in place. The CWA will also explore, with other association committees, current guidelines for eligibility extension and scholarship renewal policies for potential changes. In the meantime, the committee encourages the membership to review its current team, department and institutional policies to ensure that they are compliant with civil rights law and designed to treat student-athletes in a non-discriminatory fashion.”